

also thank Andrew Dohrman and Jason Albritton. I would include so many others, but I see that Senator BOXER is still here, and I would like to just conclude right now. I know Senator BOXER wants to recognize some of the people that worked so hard in her shop, and we worked with a lot of people.

I will yield to Senator BOXER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am so relieved we voted on a 5-year, fully-funded surface transportation bill that increases funding for our highway and transit programs. This is a monumental accomplishment for us all. The Environment and Public Works Committee has led the way to achieving the longest surface transportation bill that this country has seen in 17 years, which is essential for jobs, for our safety, and for our economic standing in the world.

This bill, which passed the House by a vote of 359 to 65, will provide the certainty that our States and local governments need to plan and construct improvements to the Nation's surface transportation system. It will support millions of jobs and thousands of businesses. Our bill has the support of a broad coalition of labor, business, and government organizations, including the AFL-CIO, Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Americans for Transportation Mobility Coalition, Teamsters, Transportation Construction Coalition, American Road and Transportation Builders Association, National Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, National Association of Manufacturers, American Trucking Associations, Highway Materials Group, Associated General Contractors, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Traffic Safety Services Association, Transport Workers Union, American Society of Civil Engineers, International Union of Operating Engineers, Amalgamated Transit Union, United Steelworkers, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors, and American Association of Port Authorities.

The FAST Act is a comprehensive bill that, among other things, modernizes federal highway and transit programs, motor carrier and vehicle safety programs, and includes a passenger rail authorization. We should also not forget that it reauthorizes the Export-Import Bank, which is so important for jobs and our economic competitiveness.

It was a mammoth task to put this bill together and it has been a roller coaster ride from day one. I am pleased that this entire process was jump-started when my dear friend JIM INHOFE, who has been my partner on many infrastructure issues, worked with me to pass a highway bill out of the EPW Committee on June 24 by a unanimous 20-0 vote. I truly believe

that it was our overwhelming bipartisan vote that set the stage and built momentum for this bill to begin moving through the Senate.

I also want to thank Chairman SHUSTER and Congressman DEFAZIO in the House. They led a strong bipartisan effort in the House of Representatives which allowed us to go to conference with the wind at our back, and while it was never an easy negotiation and neither side got everything that they wanted, I think we are all pleased with the outcome. I want to thank all the members of the conference committee, with a special thanks to Senators DURBIN and NELSON, who are strong supporters of the conference report.

Let me highlight a few things in this bill that I am so proud of:

The bill creates and significantly funds two new programs: No. 1, the National Highway Freight Program, which will improve goods movement; and No. 2, the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program, a competitive grants program to support major projects.

It provides \$199 million to help commuter railroads install positive train control. It includes the Raechel and Jaqueline Houck Safe Rental Car Act, to protect consumers from leasing unsafe recalled rental vehicles. This cause has been incredibly important to me. I have worked tirelessly to get this safety provision into law. It will save lives in the future and is an example of the positive things we can do to prevent families from suffering from tragedies resulting from defective rental cars in the future.

I have been working for years to pass a long-term transportation bill, because our Nation's aging infrastructure needs robust investment to keep us competitive in the global marketplace. Our country has over 61,000 structurally deficient bridges and 50 percent of our Nation's roads are in less than good condition. More than 30,000 people die from traffic accidents each year.

The passage of MAP-21, for which I chaired the conference committee in 2012, provided 2 years of certainty and made key innovations for transportation.

Now, the FAST Act, which increases highway and transit funding, will enable our State and local governments to make new investments to improve our roads, bridges, and transit systems, which will improve safety, increase mobility, and keep goods moving efficiently. Improving our transportation infrastructure should not be a partisan issue, and I thank Leader MCCONNELL and Senator INHOFE for working closely with me to do the right thing for our country.

This entire process has been about trust, teamwork, and persistence, and I couldn't be more proud of what we have accomplished.

I would like to thank all of the staff that played an important role in this bill. As I have said, getting to this point has been a process that would

make the workings of a sausage factory look appealing in comparison.

Mr. President, I know it is late, and I know we are all exhausted, but you have to mark a moment. I think this bill was such a monumental effort and the staffs that we are mentioning—Senator INHOFE is right—they were working constantly. The reason I know is that I called them constantly.

Senator INHOFE is right again. I called my staff; I called his staff; I called Senator THUNE's staff. I called everybody's staff. Right? I drove them crazy.

One time my little granddaughter was there, and I was getting into a bit of an altercation with a Member from the House, and I whispered to my granddaughter: Tell him to help your grandmother.

She got on the phone and said: Please help my grandmother. She had no idea.

The gentleman on the other end said: Oh, boy, you are tough. OK. We got through that night all right.

I am going to also thank the House family who helped us write the Safe Rental Car Act.

In closing, I am going to read these names on my team: Bettina Poirier, David Napoliello, Andrew Dohrmann, Tyler Rushforth, Jason Albritton, Ted Illston, Mary Kerr, Kate Gilman, Colin MacCarthy, and Kathryn Bacher.

From Senator INHOFE's team, I have to mention them again: Alex Hergott, Ryan Jackson, Shant Boyajian, Susan Bodine, Andrew Neely, and Chaya Koffman.

For Leader MCCONNELL: Neil Chatterjee, Hazen Marshall, and many others.

For the Banking Committee staff, I want to thank Mark Powden, Shannon Hines, Jennifer Deci, and Homer Carlisle.

For Senator NELSON: Kim Lipsky, Devon Barnhart, Matt Kelly, and Brandon Kaufman.

For Senator THUNE: Dave Schweitert, Adrian Arnakis, Allison Cullen, and Patrick Fuchs.

We built trust, we worked together, and we forged real friendships. I will never forget this as long as I live. I am grateful to everyone.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING GOVERNOR OLENE WALKER

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute today to Governor Olene Walker, a woman beloved in my home State of Utah and regarded across the